

Epidemiologic Evaluation of Child Abuse and Neglect in School-Aged Children of Qazvin Province, Iran

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Received: Nov 29, 2011; Accepted: Oct 29, 2012; First Online Available: Jan 25, 2012

Abstract

Objective: This study was carried out to detect the prevalence of child abuse in three domains of physical, psychological and neglect among elementary school aged children of Qazvin Province, Iran.

Methods: In this descriptive-analytic and cross-sectional study, 1028 elementary school aged children of Qazvin Province selected through multistage cluster sampling were assessed for child abuse in all domains, except for sexual abuse through a researcher-made questionnaire. The questionnaire was standardized for validity and reliability. Gathered data was statistically analyzed and *P*-value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Findings: Out of 1028 studied children, including 540 (52.5%) boys and 488 (47.5%) girls 679 (66.05%) cases declared at least one type of child abuse. The number of positive cases for each domain of emotional, physical and neglect was 618 (60.1%), 360 (35%) and 394 (38.3%) respectively. No significance was seen regarding the gender and/or regions of living in any of the domains and total prevalence.

Conclusion: Regarding the results of this study which showed a prevalence rate of 66% for child abuse; and since there are strong association between child maltreatment and its impacts in juvenile and adulthood periods in the forms of offending, mental health concerns such as suicide and homicide, substance abuse, school failure, employment difficulties, teenage pregnancy, adult attachment difficulties, family violence, intergenerational violence and so on, appropriate education to the parents, and the punishment laws for child abuse is recommended.

Iranian Journal of Pediatrics, Volume 23 (Number 2), April 2013, Pages: 159-164

Key Words: Child Abuse; Child Maltreatment; Emotional Disturbances; Child Neglect; Violence; Iran

Introduction

Child abuse (child maltreatment) as one of the types of violence is a multifactorial problem affecting the health and well-being of large numbers of children worldwide^[1]. In 1999, the WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention

defined the following definition: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of

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